



Kentucky Fish & Wildlife Commissioner's NEWSLETTER

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Hunter Education staff saves elderly couple



Hunter Education Supervisor Bill Balda

Thanks to the department's hunter education staff, the story of a lost elderly couple ended happily.

The story unfolded at Jenny Wiley State Resort Park near Prestonsburg around 6 p.m. on Nov. 4th. Hunter Education Supervisor Bill Balda and his staff, Mary McQuillen, Bobby McKee, Will Connelly, George Mountjoy and Melinda Driskell, were wrapping up a meeting

when they heard a voice calling from the road above their cabin.

McQuillen looked outside and noticed an elderly couple in their 80s standing at the road. Connelly ran up the stairs to the road, and then called for assistance from McKee, an emergency medical technician (EMT), while Balda drove the

department's mini-van to the couple.

The couple, Robert and Loretta Butler, were wearing coats but no hats, gloves or other clothing suitable for the sub-freezing temperature. They appeared to be suffering from hypothermia. "The older

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Couple located

This article reprinted from the Kentucky Post

An elderly dementia-stricken couple from Colerain Township who had been reported missing Monday were found safe Tuesday in Jenny Wiley State Resort Park in Prestonsburg, Ky., about 200 miles from their home.

Robert Butler, 85, and his wife, Loretta Butler, 82, were walking on a park road when they were located at 6 p.m. by officials of the Kentucky Division of Wildlife Resources.

Emergency medical personnel were called to the scene and the two were determined to be in good condition.

The couple had not been seen locally since about 12:30 p.m. Monday, according to Hamilton County Sheriff's deputies. The Butlers both suffer from dementia and relatives feared the pair may have gotten confused and lost.

Police reported that the couple had been seen about 4 a.m. Tuesday in Frankfort, Ky., nearly 115 miles from their home.

From the Commissioner's office

We wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from the Commissioner's office. Thank you for all your contributions to the conservation of our fish and wildlife resources. Thank you also for extending your loyalty and courtesy to the sportsmen and women of the Commonwealth. Let's never forget that they are the ones that ultimately make our efforts possible through their license purchases. You each play an important role in this agency and we appreciate all you do. We look forward to a new year of working together on ongoing and new opportunities.



"Hunter Education," continued

gentleman was leaning over the fence, and he didn't look too good," Balda said.

McKee checked the couple and found they were okay, other than suffering from the cold. Mrs. Butler told Balda that they had gone out for a walk and were getting cold and tired. Balda turned up the van's heat and began driving the couple down the road to find their home.

Balda suspected something was wrong when the road turned to gravel, then ended at a turnaround to a trailhead and the closed gate to a youth camp. The mystery deepened as the wife gave different stories about why they were there, first to get groceries, then to visit with McKee.

The staff decided to take the couple to the park's lodge. Once there, they discovered the couple had been reported missing from their Cincinnati home some 48 hours earlier. News agencies and television stations had been broadcasting reports of the couple's disappearance, and law enforcement agencies in several states were searching for them.

Both husband and wife suffered from dementia, according to reports. "It's a minor miracle that they drove from Cincinnati all the way to Jenny Wiley without getting into some kind of accident," Balda said.

Mountjoy entertained the couple with stories as they all had dinner together while awaiting the arrival of a social worker to tend to the couple. McKee helped warm them with coffee, hot chocolate and soup for dinner. Mr. Butler, who said little during the van ride, became more talkative and animated as he got warmer.

"There's no doubt in my mind that he would not have seen midnight and she would not have seen dawn if we had not found them," Balda said. "Our people did well. They were very professional and very caring.

"The Department can be proud of the performance and actions of our hunter education staff," said Balda.

**Richardson named to Outdoor Life 25**

What do Ray Scott, Dick and Jim Cabela, Ted Nugent and Jennie Richardson have in common? They all just made the *Outdoor Life* 25, a tribute to the most influential people in hunting, fishing and conservation.

In April, *Outdoor Life* magazine, with a circulation approaching one million, asked its regular contributing writers to nominate people who were making a difference on the grassroots level – men and women who promoted hunting and fishing, worked for conservation, introduced the next generation to the outdoors or made contributions to the outdoor industry. The result was a very long list, and only a handful made the final cut.

For Richardson, Kentucky's National Archery in the School's Program (NASP) coordinator, being honored alongside some of the most well-known people in outdoor sports and conservation was overwhelming.

"I felt undeserving, because there are so many people out there who are making a difference – at Fish and Wildlife, other DNRs, conservation organizations and the archery industry," said Richardson. "I thought, 'what difference does my little

piece make?'"

The answer to that question may be found in the comments left to support Richardson in the magazine's online poll for the *Outdoor Life* Reader's Choice Award: "She deserves this award more than any other person...she was always there for me when I needed her"; "What a wonderful sport for our children"; "She is determined to touch each and every kid's heart through the National Archery in the School's Program"; "Breckinridge Co. and Custer School loves you!!!" and many more. She may not be the father of bass fishing, operate a huge hunting and fishing store or host a television show, but Richardson's contribution has been recognized one child at a time.

The Reader's Choice Award voting closed with Richardson in the top three. Go to outdoorlife.com to read about the *Outdoor Life* 25, see Richardson's profile and check for the upcoming announcement of the Reader's Choice Award winner.

The *Outdoor Life* 25 will be honored at a special event held in conjunction with the 2008 Shooting, Hunting and Outdoor Trade Show in Las Vegas, February 1-5.

Cooper wins state Volunteer Steward Award

Mary Carol Cooper recently received the 2007 Volunteer Steward Award from the Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission. Cooper, who runs the Native Plant Program for the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources, received the award unanimously by the commission's staff.

Joyce Bender, branch manager for the commission, called Cooper a "dedicated ally" in the effort to manage and protect the State Nature Preserve system. "Her contribution is great and this award is our humble attempt to give her the recognition she deserves for her devotion," Bender said in her award remarks.

"I'm very honored to receive this

award – I was touched," Cooper said. "It means a lot to me."

Cooper has volunteered for the Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission since 1993, when she helped clear trails at Brigadoon State Nature Preserve in Barren County. In addition to herself, Cooper is noted for being able to round up other volunteers from the Sierra Club to help with projects.

Cooper, a Kentucky Fish and Wildlife employee for nearly 11 years, has been active in teaching the public how to use native plants to create wildlife havens. She also serves on the Kentucky Exotic Pest Plant Council.



New Employees

Administrative Services Division

Jennifer Morrison began on December 1st as an Internal Policy Analyst I with the Administrative Services Division. Jennifer comes to us from the Justice and Public Safety Cabinet, and will be responsible for agency cash receipts, re-deposits as well cold checks & recovery. Jennifer brings with her a Bachelors degree in Accounting from Sullivan University and extensive experience in both accounting and grants in both the private and state government arena.

Jeff Zingg began on December 5th as an Accountant II with the Administrative Services Division. Jeff will be responsible for assisting in processing all invoice and utility payments for the department. Jeff brings with him an education from Eastern Kentucky University as well as more than eight years of hands-on experience in accounts payables and receivables.

Fisheries Division

The Fisheries Division would like to

welcome **Scott Barrett** to the Department. On November 16th, Scott was hired as a Fisheries Biologist I at the Minor Clark Fish Hatchery in Morehead, Kentucky. Scott is a 2006 graduate of Eastern Kentucky University with a Bachelor of Science Degree in wildlife management. He will also complete his Masters of Biology Degree in fisheries from Eastern Kentucky University in 2008.

Scott has previously worked as a Park Naturalist at Natural Bridge State Park from 2002-2004 and as a Fish and Wildlife Technician at Minor Clark Fish Hatchery since March 2007. Scott is an avid hunter and angler and will be a valuable employee to the hatchery.

Law Enforcement

The Law Enforcement Division welcomes 15 new recruits. They are listed as follows:

Heath Culberson assigned to Breckinridge County. Heath has prior military and law enforcement experience.

Jeremy McQueary assigned to Green County. Jeremy has completed his DOCJT training and was Valedictorian of his class.

Michael Caudill assigned to Metcalfe County. Michael has prior law enforcement and military experience.

Jeffrey Jewell assigned to Barren County. Jeffrey has prior military and law enforcement experience.

John Jackson assigned to Simpson County. John comes to us from the Kentucky Division of Forestry.

Gabe Welch assigned to Edmonson County. Gabe previously owned and managed an automotive repair business.

Jacob Bowman assigned to Lee County. Jacob has prior military experience and is the son of retired Wayne County conservation officer, Mike Bowman.

Loren Clark assigned to Daviess County. Loren has prior military experience.

Andrew Black assigned to Menifee County. Andrew has prior military experience.

See "New Employees," page 8.

USFWS recognizes KDFWR for contribution to wood duck management



Recently Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources was recognized by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and awarded two plaques for the

Department's contribution to successful population and harvest monitoring efforts of wood ducks and our long term commitment to waterfowl management in the state. Rocky Pritchert accepted the award on behalf of the Department.

KDFWR has historically been very proactive in wood duck management, spearheading efforts to expand pre-season banding of this important waterfowl species. The past two

years have been no exception. Wood duck banding by KDFWR wildlife biologists across the state resulted in 2,063 and 1,633 birds in 2006 and 2007, respective-

ly, far exceeding the state's banding quota of 896 birds.

It is precisely this exceptional banding effort and performance that allowed Kentucky's September wood duck season to make the transition from an experimental season to an operational season, which means the department no longer must justify its September season to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on an annual basis.

Since wood ducks are primarily found in forested wetlands, they are difficult to observe. Wood duck populations are best monitored by an active banding program and KDFWR has led the way in this effort.

"I really must applaud the efforts of our field staff," said Pritchert. "It is their banding efforts that have made this possible. They are a true testament to the professionalism of the Department."

Conservation Officer Allen Wilson, Sgt. Phillip Bardin, and officers Tony Wright and William Earlywine (left to right) were presented with the Conservation Officers Lifesaving Award before the Fish and Wildlife Commission this month by order of the Commissioner. Wilson and Bardin were working together on Lake Cumberland when they encountered a man in the water that had been struck by the boat towing him on a tube. Their quick action in stabilizing the stricken man and transporting him to a marina where he was taken to the hospital saved his life. While off duty, Wright came upon an unconscious person in a convenience store parking lot and administered CPR and emergency breathing for more than 10 minutes until EMTs arrived. His quick action saved that life as well. Earlywine was working on the Licking River with fellow officer Cory Ellis when their boat hit a submerged log and flipped in swift water. Ellis was knocked unconscious and floated away face down. Earlywine swam to Ellis, cradled his head above water and got him to shore where he called for help.

Officers receive Lifesaving Awards



KDFWR staff attend prescribed burn training



Wildlife Division employees gathered around fire control equipment during a workshop recently entitled "Prescribed Fire – A Management Tool" at the Wendell Ford National Guard Training Site in Greenville.

and evaluating burn units for planned prescribed fires. The individual burn crews inspected burn units and noted all variables that would be necessary to write a prescribed burn plan and actually implement the burn.

The individual crews also received field training on wildland-type fire engines and the equipment needed to set up and utilize such engines. The workshop

More than 35 Wildlife Division employees, along with representatives from the Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission and Quail Unlimited, attended a workshop on ecological burning at the Wendell T. Ford National Guard Training Site in Greenville, KY, during the week of October 15th.

The workshop, entitled "Prescribed Fire – A Management Tool", was hosted by the KY Chapter of The Nature Conservancy and the KDFWR. Instructors at the workshop consisted of representatives from numerous agencies and organizations, including The Nature Conservancy (KY, IN, AR, & OH chapters), KDFWR, UT Knoxville, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Following the general guideline of prescribed burning for ecological benefits, the first day of the workshop provided instruction on topics such as the history of prescribed fire and reasons for burning, prescribed fire in grassland and oak systems, and the ecological effects of fire.

The following days of classroom instruction focused on the practical application of prescribed burning, personal safety, fire weather, fire behavior, computer modeling, ignition techniques, and smoke management.

The workshop included a field component that consisted of participants separating into different "burn crews"

concluded with burn crews preparing and presenting detailed prescribed burn plans for peer review.

Due to wet weather conditions, the planned burns were cancelled but participants benefited from the planning and writing phases of the prescribed burn plans through various discussions with peers from around the state.





A look back at 2007 and the Cumberland tailwater trout fishery

On January 19, 2007, the Nashville District of the Army Corps of Engineers was charged with maintaining Lake Cumberland at a stable 680 ft above mean sea level in order to make emergency repairs to Wolf Creek Dam. Normal summer pool elevation is 723 ft above mean sea level.

The reduced lake elevation, in addition to one of the worst droughts in Kentucky's history, created some challenging conditions for our most important trout fishery in 2007.

The most challenging condition was created by the dramatic reduction in the volume of tailwater release from Lake Cumberland, which provides cold water for the trout fishery. The normal, regular release schedule typically maintains water temperatures no higher than the low 60's F in the tailwater, even during the warm days of July and August. Temperatures exceeding 68 F are stressful to trout.

Knowing that high river temperature (resulting from minimal tailwater releases) might be a problem, KDFWR and Corps personnel deployed automatic temperature readers throughout the river. KDFWR

also made contact with the Cumberland County Water Plant and was able to get daily water temperature data.

Conditions first began to worsen in the tailwater around the middle of May due to declining water releases from Wolf Creek Dam. This allowed the ambient air temperature to have an increasing effect on the river temperature, resulting in a rapid warming of the tailwater, especially the lower half of the river from Burkesville to the state line (approximately 40 miles).

KDFWR immediately began working with the Nashville District to space out turbine generation to best conserve water, while maximizing its cooling potential. Unfortunately, the hot, dry weather intensified the conditions.

Due to the lack of rain, there was no runoff to pass through the dam and with the Corps operating the lake near the 680 ft level there wasn't any flexibility to release more water. As a result, on June 7, the Corps complied with KDFWR's request to cease all turbine generation and began releasing colder water from deeper water in the lake through sluice gates.

This change in operation temporarily reduced the water temperature through some of the river, but the degree of the decline was reduced further downstream. Unfortunately, only the upper 35 miles were cool enough to be suitable for trout.

With water temperatures at Burkesville hovering in the upper 60's in early June, fisheries personnel feared that there would be a fish kill downstream of Burkesville.

In a proactive response on June 16th, Commissioner Gassett authorized an emergency measure which liberalized trout regulations on a 40-mile stretch of river from the state line to 100 yards upstream of the public boat ramp at Burkesville in Cumberland County. In this section of the river, anglers were allowed to keep 10 trout of any size.

With the exception of a brief respite in late July, the amount of water released from the dam declined as the drought continued. Fisheries personnel monitored the situation and made weekly suggestions to the Corps on the best way to allocate the daily releases of water.

Fortunately, a fish kill was never observed on the tailwater. Some anecdotal evidence suggests that trout in the lower reaches may have migrated upstream to areas on the river that were more favorable. By the middle of September, due to cooling weather conditions, water temperatures throughout the length of the tailwater finally declined to a more favorable level.

On September 24, the emergency regulation was rescinded and the normal regulations were reinstated for the entire tailwater.

Presently, water released from the dam is still minimal and the river remains low. The good news is the trout fishery remains in excellent condition in the upper half of the river above Burkesville, and wading conditions are more favorable than at any other time. Anglers have been reporting excellent fishing all year. Hopefully, 2008 will not see another dramatic drought, and Lake Cumberland's summer pool level will be 10 feet higher at 690 feet.

Mitigation Banking in Kentucky



Photo is of South Shore WMA in Greenup County that has been donated to the Department through mitigation banking for permanent protection.

A large part of the Environmental Section's activities involves participating in the 404 Program of the Clean Water Act. Section 404 of the Clean Water Act requires that permit applicants whose activities cannot avoid wetland or stream impacts must mitigate these impacts by restoring streams or wetlands.

As a result, 404 permit applicants that do not have the knowledge to mitigate stream or wetland impacts can pay an in-lieu recipient who will undertake the task of mitigation or they may elect to pay a private mitigation bank.

The Environmental Section serves as the Department's representative and voting member on the Mitigation Review Team (MRT) that guides and approves activities of mitigation banking and the

in-lieu fee program.

Just what is mitigation banking?

Mitigation banking is a proactive approach to stream and wetland conservation that involves restoring streams or wetlands in advance of impacts under an agreement with the Corps of Engineers and the MRT.

The sponsor of the mitigation bank receives "mitigation credits" for the wetlands or streams restored. The sponsor then "banks" these mitigation credits for use in future 404 permits. Some mitigation bank sponsors completely donate sites to the Department for long term protection at a future date upon completion.

In Kentucky, permanent protection of mitigation bank sites has been achieved through conservation easements, deed

restrictions, or transferring site ownership to a resource agency or conservation organization. As part of the MRT, the Department stresses the important role that permanent protection serves in mitigation.

To date, several properties have been donated to the Department through mitigation banking to achieve permanent protection. These properties include: 1) The Williams WMA in Nelson County; 2) The South Shore WMA in Greenup County; and 3) An 86 acre site donated by the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet, which added to the current Sloughs WMA in Union County.

Existing and

proposed mitigation bank sites are located in Lincoln County near the Dix River WMA, Meadow Creek in Wayne County, Nelson County adjacent to Williams WMA, Campbell County on the Licking River, Marshall County near Clark's River National Wildlife Refuge, Calloway County adjacent to East Fork Clark's River, and numerous stream sites in eastern Kentucky.

The Department, through the Environmental Section, continues to work with mitigation bank sponsors to consider state or federal resource agency ownership as a means to protect mitigation sites.

The concept of mitigation banking is encouraged because it benefits fish and wildlife on a landscape level and restores habitat in advance of impacts.



Commonwealth Connection for 2007-2008

Kentucky local, state and federal employees and retirees:

Have a little vacation or comp time to use up and need a quick getaway? Don't forget the unique beauty and history surrounding you right here in Kentucky!

Take advantage of the Kentucky State Parks' Commonwealth Connection program which offers you reduced rates on lodge rooms and cottages at "the nation's finest."

Good from Nov. 4, 2007 through March 31, 2008.

Lodge Room -- \$44.95

1BR Cottage -- \$74.95

2BR Cottage -- \$84.95

3BR Cottage -- \$94.95

There are two ways to make your reservations at any one of our breathtaking resort parks. Visit us at www.parks.ky.gov and use the promo code "CC7" if making your reservation online.

If you prefer to call, you will find a list of phone numbers on our website or you may call 1-800-255-PARK (7275) to be transferred to the park of your choice. Be sure to mention the "Commonwealth Connection" to receive your special rate. Proof of government employment or past service may be required at check-in.

Subject to availability. May exclude park special events and holiday weekends. For leisure travel only. Subject to applicable taxes.

"New Employees," continued

Aaron Daniels assigned to Grayson County. Aaron has prior military experience and previously served as a Kentucky State Park Ranger.

Patrick Younts assigned to Wolfe County. Patrick has prior military experience and previously served as a Kentucky State Park Ranger.

Jarad Northern assigned to Rockcastle County. Jarad has prior law enforcement experience.

Dustin Mullins assigned to Henderson County. Dustin previously served as a camp counselor at Camp Webb and comes to us from the Kentucky State Parks.

Raymond Durham assigned to Ohio County. Raymond has served as a corrections officer with the Kentucky Department of Corrections.

Jason Wells assigned to Marion County. Jason comes to us from NLF Construction as an operations manager.

Wildlife Division

Chris Garland was appointed in October to the vacant Assistant Director position which opened up with Don Walker's retirement. Chris is very familiar to KDFWR since he came to us from the NRCS as a Liaison Biologist in Area 2. Prior to that, he has worked for the Department as a Wildlife Biologist on numerous projects since 1995.

Zach Danks has been appointed as a Farm Bill Biologist with the Graves County NRCS Service Center. He comes to us from Logan County and has a Bachelors of Science in Natural Resource Conservation and Management through UK and a Masters Degree in Wildlife

Biology and Management through State University of New York; College of Environmental Science and Forestry.

Rachel Bush has been appointed as a CREP Biologist with the Warren County NRCS Service Center. She comes to us from Springport, Michigan and has a Bachelors of Science in Fisheries and Wildlife Management through Lake Superior State University.

Curtis Francis has been appointed as a CREP Biologist with the Hart County NRCS Service Center. He comes to us from Fraser, Michigan and has a Bachelors of Science in Fisheries and Wildlife Management through Lake Superior State University.

Jason Nally has been appointed as a CREP Biologist with the Adair County NRCS Service Center. He comes to us from Lebanon, Kentucky and has a Bachelors of Science in Wildlife Management through Eastern Kentucky University.

Kate Heyden will be working in the avian ecology program working with songbirds and raptors. She will be assisting with coordination of bird surveys, data management and raptor monitoring. She has her BS in Wildlife Biology from Ball State.

Jim Hinkle will be working a technician position with the Center for Mollusk Conservation under Dr. Monte McGregor. Jim formerly served as a fisheries technician. His knowledge of aquatic species and excellent work ethic will prove a great fit at this facility.

Dr. Danna Baxley has assumed the position of SWG/Research Coordinator for the agency. Dr. Baxley obtained her BS at Warren Wilson College and completed her PhD at the University of Southern Mississippi where she studied black pine snakes.